



U.S. distances itself from demands for Israel-Hamas cease-fire

Associated Press

The Biden administration distanced itself Monday from growing calls by Democrats and others for an immediate cease-fire between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers as fighting entered a second week, with more than 200 people dead, most of them Palestinians in Gaza.

The United States, Israel's top ally, also blocked for the third time what would have been a unanimous statement by the 15-nation U.N. Security Council expressing "grave concern" over the intensifying Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the loss of civilian lives. The final U.S. rejection Monday killed the Security Council statement, at least for now. White House press secretary Jen Psaki and national

security adviser Jake Sullivan said the United States instead was focusing on "quiet, intensive diplomacy." As missile and rocket exchanges between Israel and Hamas surged to their worst levels since 2014 and the international outcry grew, the Biden administration — determined to wrench U.S. foreign policy focus away from the Middle East and Afghanistan — has declined so far to criticize Israel's part in the fighting, send a top-level envoy to the region or press Israel publicly to wind down its latest military operation in the thickly populated Gaza Strip, as some past U.S. administrations have done. Appeals by other countries so far show no sign of progress.

Continued on next page



President Joe Biden speaks about distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, in the East Room of the White House, Monday, May 17, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

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White House press secretary Jen Psaki speaks during a briefing at the White House, Monday, May 17, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

The U.S. administration's publicly tempered response comes despite calls from Security Council partners, some Democrats and others for President Joe Biden and other international leaders to wade more deeply into diplomacy to end the worst Israel-Palestinian violence in years and revive long-collapsed mediation for genuine peace there.

Speaking in Copenhagen, where he was making an unrelated tour of Nordic countries, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken ticked off other, quieter U.S. outreach so far to try to de-escalate hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel, and said he would be making more calls Monday.

"In all of these engagements we have made clear that we are prepared to lend our support and good offices to the parties should they seek a cease-fire," Blinken said.

He said he welcomed efforts by the U.N., Egypt and other nations working for a cease-fire.

"Any diplomatic initiative that advances that prospect is something that we'll support," he said. "And we are again willing and ready to do that. But ultimately it is up to the parties to make clear that they want to pursue a cease-fire."

Pulling back from Middle East diplomacy to focus on other policy priorities — such as Biden's emphasis on dealing with the rise of China — carries political risk for the administration. That includes weathering any blame when violence flares as the U.S. steps back from conflict zones in the Middle East, and Afghanistan. But a relatively hands-off approach in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict also could spare the U.S. years of shuttle diplomacy in support of a peace process that neither side actively supports.

At least 200 Palestinians had been killed in the strikes as of Monday, including 59 children and 35 women, with 1,300 people wounded, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Eight people in Israel have

been killed in rocket attacks launched from Gaza, including a 5-year-old boy and a soldier.

Blinken also said he had asked Israel for any evidence for its claim that Hamas was operating in an Gaza office building housing The Associated Press and Al Jazeera news bureaus that was destroyed in an Israeli airstrike over the weekend. But he said that he personally had "not seen any information provided." Blinken's comments came after U.N. Security Council diplomats and Muslim foreign ministers convened emergency weekend meetings to demand a stop to civilian bloodshed, as Israeli warplanes carried out the deadliest single attacks Sunday in the week of fighting.

Biden's ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, told an emergency high-level meeting of the Security Council on Sunday that the United States was "working tirelessly through diplomatic channels" to stop the fighting.

She warned that the return to armed conflict would only put a negotiated two-state solution to the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict even further out of reach.

However, the United States blocked moves by China, Norway and Tunisia in the Security Council for the statement by the U.N.'s most powerful body, including a call for the cessation of hostilities. The proposed statement called for an end to "the crisis related to Gaza" and the protection of civilians, especially children. In Israel, Hady Amr, a deputy assistant dispatched by Blinken to try to de-escalate the crisis, met with officials. Blinken himself has no announced plans to stop in the Middle East on his current trip.

Rep. Adam Schiff, Democratic chairman of the House intelligence committee, urged Biden on Sunday to step up pressure on both sides to end the fighting and revive talks to resolve Israel's conflicts and flashpoints with the Palestinians. "I think the administration

needs to push harder on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to stop the violence, bring about a cease-fire, end these hostilities, and get back to a process of trying to resolve this long-standing conflict," Schiff, a California Democrat, told CBS's "Face the Nation."

Sen. Todd Young of Indiana, the senior Republican on the Foreign Relations subcommittee for the region, joined Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, the subcommittee chairman, in asking both sides to cease fire. Sen. Jon Ossoff of Georgia separately joined 26 other Democratic senators and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, an independent, on Sunday in urging an immediate cease-fire to prevent further civilian deaths and any further escalation of the overall conflict. More Democratic lawmakers joined the calls Monday.

Biden focused on civilian deaths from Hamas rockets in a call with Netanyahu on Saturday, and a White House readout of the call made no mention of the U.S. urging Israel to join in a cease-fire that regional countries were pushing. Thomas-Greenfield said U.S. diplomats were engaging with Israel, Egypt and Qatar, along with the U.N. Netanyahu told Israelis in a televised address Sunday that Israel "wants to levy a heavy price" on Hamas. That will "take time," Netanyahu said, signaling the war would rage on for now.

Representatives of Muslim nations met Sunday to demand Israel halt attacks that are killing Palestinian civilians in the crowded Gaza strip.

At the virtual meeting of the Security Council, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that returning to the Palestinian rocket fire and Israeli airstrikes in the fourth such war between Israel and Hamas, "only perpetuates the cycles of death, destruction and despair, and pushes farther to the horizon any hopes of coexistence and peace." Eight foreign ministers spoke at the Security Council session, reflecting the seriousness of the conflict, with almost all urging an end to the fighting. □

Supreme Court to take up major abortion rights challenge

By MARK SHERMAN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court agreed Monday to a showdown over abortion in a case that could dramatically alter nearly 50 years of rulings on abortion rights.

With three justices appointed by President Donald Trump part of a 6-3 conservative majority, the court is taking on a case about whether states can ban abortions before a fetus can survive outside the womb.

Mississippi, which is asking to be allowed to enforce an abortion ban after 15 weeks of pregnancy, is not asking the court to overrule the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision confirming a woman's right to an abortion, or a decision 19 years later that reaffirmed it.

But abortion rights supporters said the case is a clear threat to abortion rights.

"The court cannot uphold this law without overturning the principal protections of *Roe v. Wade*," Nancy Northup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights, said in a call with reporters.

Even if the court does not explicitly overrule earlier cases, a decision favorable to the state could lay the groundwork for allowing even more restrictions on abortion, including state bans on abortion once a fetal heartbeat is detected, as early as six weeks.

The case probably will be argued in the fall, with a decision likely in the spring of 2022 during the campaign for congressional midterm elections.

Mississippi's ban had been blocked by lower courts as inconsistent with Supreme Court precedent that protects a woman's right to obtain an abortion before the fetus can survive outside her womb.

"States may regulate abortion procedures prior to viability so long as they do not impose an undue burden on the woman's right, but they may not ban abortions. The law at issue is a ban," Judge Patrick Higginbotham of the 5th U.S. Cir-



In this June 29, 2020 file photo, the Supreme Court is seen on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

cuit Court of Appeals wrote in affirming a lower-court ruling that invalidated the law.

The Supreme Court had previously turned down state appeals over viability abortion bans.

More than 90% of abortions take place in the first 13 weeks of a woman's pregnancy, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

John Bursch, vice president of the anti-abortion Alliance Defending Freedom, said the high court has repeatedly held that states can regulate abortions later in pregnancy.

Viability "has never been a legitimate way to determine a developing infant's dignity or to decide anybody's legal existence," Bursch said.

The justices had put off action on the case for several months. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, an abortion rights proponent, died just before the court's new term began in October. Her replacement, Justice Amy Coney Barrett, is the most open opponent of abortion rights to join the court in decades.

Barrett is one of three Trump appointees on the Supreme Court. The other two, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, voted in dissent last year to allow Louisiana to enforce restrictions on doctors that could have closed two of

the state's three abortion clinics.

Chief Justice John Roberts, joined by Ginsburg and the other three liberal justices, said the restrictions were virtually identical to a Texas law the court struck down in 2016.

But that majority no longer exists, even if Roberts, hardly an abortion rights supporter in his more than 15 years on the court, sides with the more liberal justices.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the Biden administration backs legislation that would write the *Roe* decision into federal law, regardless of the outcome of the Supreme Court case. The legislation would put an end to state efforts to ban abortion, Northup said.

The Mississippi law was enacted in 2018, but was blocked after a federal

viability is an arbitrary standard that doesn't take sufficient account of the state's interest in regulating abortion.

The Mississippi law would allow exceptions to the 15-week ban in cases of medical emergency or severe fetal abnormality. Doctors found in violation of the ban would face mandatory suspension or revocation of their medical license.

Also on Monday the Supreme Court:

— Split 6-3 along conservative-liberal lines to rule that prisoners who were convicted by non-unanimous juries before the high court barred the practice a year ago don't need to be retried. The decision affects prisoners who were convicted in Louisiana and Oregon as well as the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico, the few places that had allowed criminal convictions based on divided jury votes.

— Sided unanimously with a man who sued after police entered his home without a warrant and seized his guns. Police said that the man was potentially suicidal and that they were performing a "community caretaking" function. The justices said authorities can't use that justification to enter a home without a warrant.

— Ruled 7-1 that an appeals court should take another look at a lawsuit involving global warming that is in its early stages. Lawyers have been arguing over whether the case belongs in state or federal court. □

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New law makes inmates choose electric chair or firing squad

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster has signed into law a bill that forces death row inmates for now to choose between the electric chair or a newly formed firing squad in hopes the state can restart executions after an involuntary 10-year pause.

South Carolina had been one of the most prolific states of its size in putting inmates to death. But a lack of lethal injection drugs brought executions to a halt.

McMaster signed the bill Friday with no ceremony or fanfare, according to the state Legislature's website. It's the first bill the governor decided to deal with after nearly 50 hit his desk Thursday.

"The families and loved ones of victims are owed closure and justice by law. Now, we can provide it," McMaster said on Twitter on Monday.

Last week state lawmakers gave their final sign offs to the bill, which retains lethal injection as the primary method of execution if the state has the drugs, but requires prison officials to use the electric chair or firing squad if it doesn't.

Prosecutors said three inmates have exhausted all



South Carolina Rep. Justin Bamberg, D-Bamberg, speaks against a proposal to add firing squads to the state's methods of execution along with the electric chair and lethal injection on Wednesday, May 5, 2021, in Columbia, S.C.

Associated Press

their normal appeals, but can't be killed because under the previous law, inmates who don't choose the state's 109-year-old electric chair automatically are scheduled to die by lethal injection. They have all chosen the method that can't be carried out. How soon executions can begin is up in the air. The electric chair is ready to use. Prison officials have been doing preliminary research into how firing squads carry out execu-

tions in other states, but are not sure how long it will take to have one in place in South Carolina. The other three states that allow a firing squad are Mississippi, Oklahoma and Utah, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. Three inmates, all in Utah, have been killed by firing squad since the U.S. reinstated the death penalty in 1977. Nineteen inmates have died in the electric chair this century, and South Carolina is one of

eight states that can still electrocute inmates, according to the center.

Lawyers for the men with potentially imminent death dates are considering suing over the new law, saying the state is going backward.

"These are execution methods that previously were replaced by lethal injection, which is considered more humane, and it makes South Carolina the only state going back to the less humane execution meth-

ods," said Lindsey Vann of Justice 360, a nonprofit that represents many of the men on South Carolina's death row.

From 1996 to 2009, South Carolina executed close to average of three inmates a year. But a lull in death row inmates reaching the end of their appeals coincided a few years later with pharmaceutical companies refusing to sell states the drugs needed to sedate inmates, relax their muscles and stop their hearts.

South Carolina's last execution took place in May 2011, and its batch of lethal injection drugs expired in 2013.

Supporters of the bill said the death penalty remains legal in South Carolina, and the state owes it to the family of the victims to find a way to carry out the punishment.

Democrats in the House suggested several changes to the bill that were not approved, including livestreaming executions on the internet and requiring lawmakers to attend executions.

"We must be willing to look at the faces of the individuals we are voting on today to kill," said Rep. Jermaine Johnson, a Democrat from Hopkins. □

Arson arrest made in L.A. wildfire that forced evacuations



A firefighting helicopter prepares to drop water onto a wildfire in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles, Sunday, May 16, 2021.

Associated Press

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An arson suspect was arrested in connection with a Los Angeles wildfire that forced

evacuations in canyons where thick vegetation hasn't burned in more than 60 years, authorities said Monday. The man detained Sunday

near the fire zone was being treated for smoke inhalation, said Los Angeles Fire Department Chief Ralph Terrazas. He did not identify the suspect or offer details about the investigation.

"We feel we have the right person," Terrazas said at a news conference.

There was zero containment of the wildfire near Topanga State Park, but crews slowed its growth aided by cool, moist weather. By Monday, flames had charred just over 2 square miles (5.4 square kilometers) of trees and heavy brush.

No buildings were damaged and no injuries reported in the blaze that broke out late Friday in the

Santa Monica Mountains. It grew rapidly Saturday — forcing about 1,000 Topanga Canyon area residents to flee their homes. Firefighting aircraft made water and retardant drops as flames raced along ridges, sending up a huge plume of smoke and raining ash across surrounding neighborhoods.

Evacuation orders remained in place and the fire was still threatening at least 500 homes, officials said.

An explosive wildfire so early in the year, especially in cool conditions with almost no wind, portends a difficult fire season ahead in a state that has seen very little rainfall, officials said.

"We really have to think about brush fires as a year-long challenge," Terrazas said.

The cause of the fire in steep, inaccessible terrain had been deemed "suspicious" after officials noticed two ignition points about an hour apart, the Fire Department said.

Arson investigators detained and released one person on Saturday and a second person was questioned and then arrested on Sunday, the department said.

Topanga Canyon is a remote, wooded community with some ranch homes bordering Malibu, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) west of downtown Los Angeles. □

Dogged by Mideast, Blinken aims to revive US-Denmark ties

By MATTHEW LEE

AP Diplomatic Writer

COPENHAGEN, Denmark

(AP) — Confronting multiple unrelated international crises, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken sought Monday to revive strained ties with Denmark, pledging renewed cooperation with the country over climate change, Arctic policy and Russia.

As calls in Washington and around the world grew for the Biden administration to take a tougher, more active stance on increasing Israeli-Palestinian violence, Blinken largely held to his initial agenda in meetings with Danish leaders and officials from Greenland and the Faeroe Islands. He cancelled only one scheduled event to make calls on the Israeli-Palestinian situation. Blinken's talks in Copenhagen came ahead of his first face-to-face encounter with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at a time of significantly heightened tensions between Washington and Moscow. That meeting is set for Wednesday in Iceland on the side-



Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen walks with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken as he leaves following meetings at Marienborg, the official residence of the Prime Minister, in Copenhagen, Denmark, May 17, 2021.

Associated Press

lines of a meeting of the Arctic Council. It will set the stage for a planned summit next month between President Joe Biden and Russian leader Vladimir Putin. While the deteriorating situation in the Middle East cast a shadow over his trip, Blinken brought a message of renewed U.S. cooperation

to Denmark. Denmark was one of several European countries that felt slighted by former President Donald Trump and expressed clear relief at the change in administrations.

"Today America is back, and in more ways than one," said Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod.

"And, let me tell you, America has been missed."

At a joint news conference with Blinken, Kofod rattled off a litany of issues on which the Biden administration has reversed course from the Trump era to Denmark's delight. Those included rejoining the Paris climate accord and World

Health Organization and re-engaging with the UN Human Rights Council and the World Trade Organization.

Kofod had met less than a year ago with Blinken's predecessor, Mike Pompeo, amid lingering mistrust created by Trump's desire to buy the Danish territory of Greenland and his cancellation of a state visit to Denmark in 2019 after his suggestions were flatly rejected.

"I am resolutely focused on today and tomorrow, not yesterday," Blinken said, adding that the United States would pursue "new partnerships" with Denmark and other countries on climate change and work more closely with like-minded nations to confront threats posed by an increasingly assertive Russia and China. But, he said that: "Across the board, I think you've seen a few short months a determination by the United States to reinvigorate its alliances and partnerships and also our engagement with international institutions." □

EU vows to boost efforts to end Israeli-Palestinian fighting

By RAF CASERT
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union will redouble its efforts to end the surge in violence between the Israeli military and Palestinian militants, and seek progress during a special meeting of its foreign ministers on Tuesday.

The EU also called the weekend destruction of a building housing The Associated Press and other major international media "extremely worrying" and said safe working conditions for journalists were essential.

The EU has never had the impact that Washington can wield in the region and no immediate breakthrough was expected from Tuesday's meeting. Ever since the outbreak of violence last week, the EU has been calling for re-

straint and condemned attacks that hit civilian populations.

Individual member states also let their voices be heard.

France's President Emmanuel Macron and Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi stressed the "absolute need" to cease hostilities

between Israel and the Palestinians, the French presidency said. Macron reaffirmed France's support to the Egyptian mediation in the conflict.

Rome also looked ahead to Tuesday's meeting. Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio said Italy had requested to discuss the Mideast

violence and said "the violence and attacks between Israel and Palestine must stop." In a Facebook post, he added that "the EU with its 27 member states must take a clear and unified position and work to press the parties to sit together again at the negotiation table."

Because EU policy toward the region requires unanimity among the 27 EU member nations, its actions and statements haven't had the impact that could be expected from a bloc of 450 million people that has large trade interests in the region.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and European Council President Charles Michel both called over the past days to call for an end to the escalation in violence and ensure that civilians are protected.

Tuesday's meeting is to seek "how best that EU can contribute to diffusing the tensions, stop the escalation and stop the ongoing violence," EU spokesman Peter Stano said.

Pro-Palestinian critics of EU policy insist the bloc has been far too lenient when it comes to imposing sanctions on Jerusalem.

The fighting broke out last week, when the Hamas militant group fired long-range rockets at Jerusalem after weeks of clashes in the city between Palestinian protesters and Israeli police. The protests were focused on the heavy-handed policing of a flash-point sacred site during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and the threatened eviction of dozens of Palestinian families by Jewish settlers. □



A Palestinian firefighter extinguishes a fire from a beachside cafe after it was hit by an Israeli airstrike, in Gaza City, Monday, May 17, 2021.

Associated Press

Around 1,000 Moroccan migrants cross into Spanish territory

By ARITZ PARRA and MOSA'AB ELSHAMY
Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Around 1,000 Moroccans, a third of whom are presumed to be minors, swam and used inflatable boats Monday to cross into the Spanish northern African enclave of Ceuta, authorities said. Ceuta and nearby Melilla are regarded as a stepping stone into Europe for African migrants. Hundreds of them risk injuries or death every year while trying to jump over fences, hide inside vehicles or by swimming around breakwaters that extend several meters into the Mediterranean Sea.

But the figure of 1,000 people making the crossing in a single day was shocking. Footage published by *El Faro de Ceuta*, a local newspaper, showed people climbing the rocky wall of the breakwaters and running across the Tarajal beach, in the southeastern end of the city. Other videos verified by The Associated Press showed long rows of young men lining up at a warehouse managed by the local Red Cross.

The influx of Moroccans



A man from Morocco reacts after entering swimming into the Spanish territory, at the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on Monday, May 17, 2021.

Associated Press

came at the end of the Muslim celebrations of Ramadan, when many residents in Europe return home after visiting relatives in the northern African country. It also followed the souring of relations between Morocco and Spain over the latter's decision to receive the leader of a militant group fighting Rabat for medical treatment. Brahim Ghali, the head of the Polisario Front that

disputes Rabat's claim on Western Sahara, is being treated for COVID-19 in a hospital in northern Spain. The Moroccan foreign ministry said last month that Spain's decision to give him shelter for "humanitarian reasons" was "inconsistent with the spirit of partnership and good neighborliness." In May, the ministry also said that Spain's move would have "consequences."

Mohammed Ben Aisa, head of the Northern Observatory for Human Rights, a nonprofit group that works with migrants in northern Morocco, said that the influx was a mix of the seasonal attempts to reach Europe, the arrival of good weather and the recent tensions between Rabat and Madrid. "The information that we have is that the Moroccan authorities reduced the

usually heavy militarization of the coasts, which come after Morocco's foreign ministry statement about Spain's hosting of Brahim Ghali," Ben Aisa told The Associated Press.

"The area is heavily monitored by security forces and attempts there, whether to climb the fence or swim, are usually stopped," he added.

Asked by reporters whether Morocco was relaxing controls on departing migrants, Spain's foreign minister simply said she had no information.

"We are not aware," Arancha González Laya said before concluding brief media remarks.

A spokesman with the Spanish government's delegation in Ceuta said that the crossings began at 2 a.m. in the border area of Ceuta known as Benzú and were then followed by a few dozen people near the eastern beach of Tarajal. The daylight didn't stop the crossings, as entire families with children, swam or boarded inflatable boats, said the spokesman, who wasn't authorized to be identified by name in media reports. □

Powerful cyclone hits land in India amid deadly virus surge



Fishermen try to move a fishing boat to a safer ground on the Arabian Sea coast in Mumbai, India, Monday, May 17, 2021.

Associated Press

By SHEIKH SAALIQ
Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — A powerful cyclone that emerged in the Arabian Sea made landfall on India's western coast on Monday, hours after authorities evacuated hundreds of thousands

of people and suspended COVID-19 vaccinations in one state.

Cyclone Tauktae, the most powerful storm to hit the region in more than two decades, came ashore in Gujarat state with heavy rain, a battering storm surge

and sustained winds of up to 165 kilometers (103 miles) per hour, the India Meteorological Department said. Forecasters warned of possible extensive damage from high winds, heavy rainfall and flooding in low-lying areas.

Twelve people were reported dead before the storm hit land and hundreds of thousands were evacuated, a process complicated by the coronavirus pandemic.

The massive storm came as India is battling a devastating coronavirus surge — and both the storm and the virus could exacerbate the effects of the other. The storm had already led to the suspension of some vaccination efforts and there is greater risk of virus transmission in crowded evacuation shelters.

In Gujarat, vaccinations were suspended for two days and authorities worked to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people to temporary relief shelters. The state's chief minister, Vijay Rupani, asked officials to ensure that oxygen supplies for hospitals are not disrupted.

In Maharashtra, six people were killed, the Press Trust of India news agency reported. The state's capital, Mumbai, was lashed by heavy rain and strong winds, forcing authorities to suspend operations at the city's main airport.

Fishing boats off the coast in both states returned to harbor and thousands of rescue and relief teams, along with ships and aircraft, were deployed for recovery operations.

Rain from the storm earlier

killed six people in Kerala, Karnataka and Goa states over the weekend before it moved along the western coastline.

Virus lockdown measures, meanwhile, could slow relief work after the storm, and damage from the storm could destroy roads and cut vital supply lines for vaccines and medical supplies needed for virus patients. Damage from the storm is also likely to particularly hurt the poor, who are already stretched to the limit by the economic impact of the virus.

The South Asia head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Udaya Regmi, said the cyclone is a "terrible double blow" for families that have already been hit by COVID-19 infections and deaths. □

Mexican president apologizes for 1911 massacre of Chinese

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's president presented an apology Monday for a 1911 massacre in which over 300 Chinese people were slaughtered by revolutionary troops in the northern city of Torreón.

The apology is the latest in a series of ceremonies in which President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has sought to make amends for the mistreatment of Indigenous and minority people in Mexico in past centuries. López Obrador said the point of the apology was to ensure "that this never, ever happens again," noting that during the period, Chinese were mutilated or hung from telegraph poles. "The discrimination was based on the most vile and offensive" stereotypes, López Obrador said, adding "these stupid ideas were transferred to Mexico, where extermination was added to exclusion and mistreatment."

Many Chinese laborers had emigrated to Mexico in the 1800s, in some cases to work on the expansion of the nation's rail network. But many set up businesses, farms and in Torreón, even a bank.



Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador talks during a ceremony marking the 700 year anniversary of the founding of Tenochtitlan, known as Mexico City at the Templo Mayor archaeological site in Mexico City, Thursday, May 13, 2021.

Associated Press

The 1911 killings of 303 Chinese men, women and children occurred during the chaotic period of the Mexican Revolution, when revolutionary troops overran Torreón, sealing the fate of long-time ruler Porfirio Díaz. The loss of the city led Díaz to resign and leave for exile.

Like most racial killings, it

was fed by suspicion, hatred, fear, envy and lies. Torreón was a booming railway town, and control of it was key to rail lines north to the United States. Some Mexicans grumbled that Chinese were taking jobs or depressing wage rates; others were envious of the Chinese community's economic success.

Between May 13-15, 1911, the revolutionary troops took control of the city from Díaz's army and once inside the city, slaughtered many of its Chinese inhabitants, though some others hid or were saved by local residents. The victorious revolutionary government of President Francisco I. Madero agreed

to pay reparations for the massacre, but Madero himself was overthrown in 1913 and the payment was never made.

"It is during the most convulsive moments of history when these (racist ideas) get twisted into genocidal killings," said Coahuila Gov. Miguel Ángel Riquelme. López Obrador, who usually lavishes praise on the 1910-1917 revolutionary movement noted that the movement also expressed anti-Chinese sentiments.

Historian Monica Cinco Basurto said the massacre was far from the only anti-Chinese act in Mexico. Looting of Chinese-owned businesses and the expulsion or forced departure of Chinese — often without recognizing their Mexican citizenship or that of their children or wives — extended throughout northern Mexico into the 1930s. López Obrador was accompanied during the apology ceremony by Chinese Ambassador Zhu Qinqiao. Mexico has relied on Chinese brands for about 10.5 million of the 29.1 million coronavirus vaccine doses received so far, or about 36% of all shots. □

Court clears way for Samoa to get its first woman leader

By NICK PERRY

WELLINGTON, New Zealand

(AP) — Samoa appeared set to get its first woman leader after the nation's top court on Monday reinstated the results of a knife-edge election last month. Two decisions by the Supreme Court have paved the way for Fiame Naomi Mata'afa to become prime minister of the small island nation.

Her ascent is a milestone for the South Pacific, which has had few female leaders. Samoa and its neighbors tend to be Christian and traditional.

An advocate for women's equality, Fiame, who was born in 1957, broke new ground during her campaign by going on the road and robustly criticizing the incumbent, Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Ma-

lielegaoi, who had been in power for 22 years. The court's decisions appeared to end what most people viewed as an attempt by Tuilaepa to cling to power. Fiame had served as his deputy before they had a bitter split.

"Glory to our Father!" Fiame's FAST Party wrote on Facebook after the court's decisions. "Now its time to get to work."

The April election initially ended in a 25-25 tie between the FAST Party and Tuilaepa's HRP Party, with one independent candidate.

But then the electoral commissioner appointed another HRP candidate, saying it was required to conform to gender quotas. The independent candidate, meanwhile, chose to go with Fiame, making it 26-26.

The head of state then stepped in to announce fresh elections to break the tie. Those elections in the nation of 200,000 were supposed to be held later this week.

Fiame's party appealed and the Supreme Court finally ruled against both the appointed candidate and the plans for the new elections, restoring the FAST Party to a 26-25 majority.

Dozens of her supporters gathered outside the court and celebrated with singing after the decision.

Fiame wrote on Facebook that while people remained confused about what had happened, she believed the incumbent government used every means, both legal and illegal, in an attempt "to stop us from taking our rightful seats in Parliament and to



In this undated photo from the FAST Party, Fiame Naomi Mata'afa poses for a portrait in Samoa. Samoa appears set to get its first female leader after the nation's top court on Monday, May 17, 2021, reinstated the results of a knife-edge election last month.

Associated Press

form the government." With the court ruling paving the way for Fiame to lead Samoa, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said it felt like a significant moment.

"It is certainly a meaningful thing when you see a historic decision made when the office is held by a woman," Ardern said. □

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Ample liquidity at local commercial banks in February 2021

ORANJESTAD —During its meeting of April 1, 2021 and after reviewing the most recent economic and monetary data, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA) decided to keep the reserve requirement at 7.0 percent. The reserve requirement refers to the minimum amount of reserves that commercial banks must hold at the CBA and is equal to 7.0 percent of their liabilities with a maturity less than 2 years. The following information and analysis were considered in reaching this decision.

International reserves

International reserves (including revaluation differences of gold and foreign exchange holdings), up to and including March 19, 2021, strengthened by Afl. 24.3 million compared to the end of December 2020. This expansion was primarily the result of external financing received by the government, inflows related to tourism services, and other external financing received by the private sector. Meanwhile, official reserves decreased by Afl. 39.3 million. Consequently, the official and international reserves reached, respectively, Afl. 2,163.9 million and Afl. 2,377.6 million as of March 19, 2021. Accordingly, the level of reserves remained adequate when benchmarked against the current account payments and the IMF ARA metric.

Credit developments

In February 2021, total credit contracted by Afl. 12.7 million or 0.3 per-

cent, when compared to the end of 2020. This was driven by the categories 'loans to individuals' (-Afl. 12.6 million/-0.7 percent) and 'other' (-Afl. 3.8 million/-0.7 percent). The category 'loans to individuals' was mostly influenced by a lower demand in consumer credit. Meanwhile, other investments and accounts receivable and prepayments held at the commercial banks negatively impacted the category 'other'. On the other hand, business loans rose up by 0.2 percent, driven by a rise in current account loans expansions.

Inflation

The CPI was 1.9 percent lower in February 2021, compared to the corresponding month a year earlier. This was mainly attributed to lower prices in the categories 'recreation and culture', 'household operation', and 'transport'. The 12-month average inflation rate continued its downward trend reaching -2.2 percent in February 2021. When excluding energy and food, the 12-month average core inflation rate stood at -0.7 percent in February 2021.

Prudential liquidity

The prudential liquidity of commercial banks (34.5 percent), which measures the amount of their liquid assets to their total net assets, remained at a comfortable level in February 2021, far above the minimum required prudential liquidity ratio (15.0 percent).□

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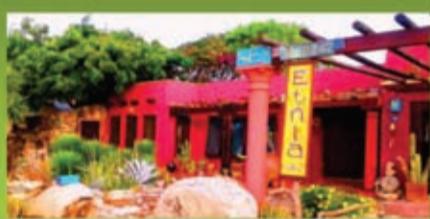
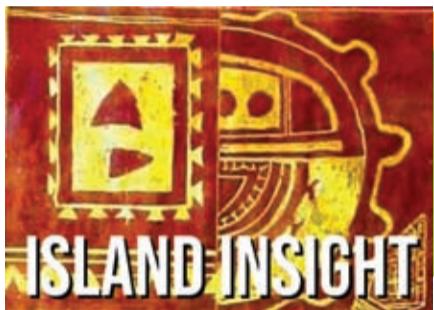
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Article by Etnia Nativa

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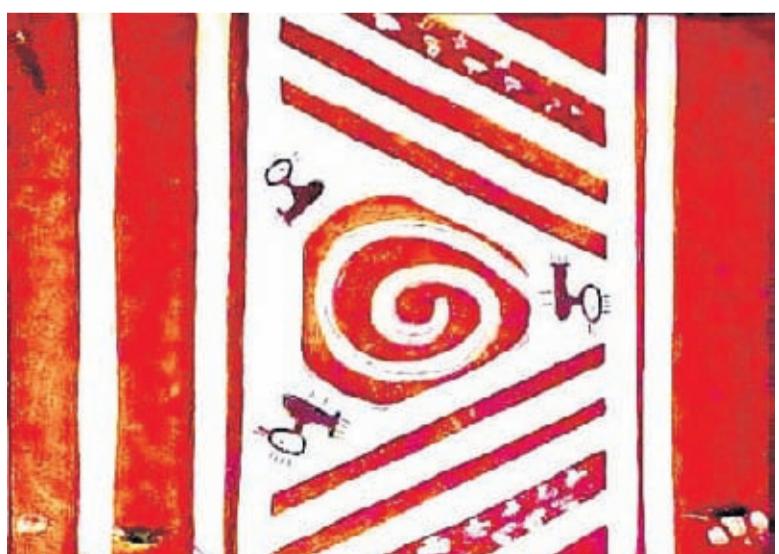
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A Ceramic Identity

NOORD — Many ceramic designs series were found by archaeologists. These unique decorations define and epoch, a cultural identity and nations heritage. In Aruba's case, islands Caquetian ancestors developed an original style classified as Dabajuroide by prehistory studios, named after the nearby city of Dabajuro, City and municipality in Southwestern Falcón State of Venezuelan.

The Dabajuro style is among the most complex works made in this region, influencing a former territory covering parts of North Western Venezuela including our ABC islands. Classical designs were made in red, black or white, but various forms of incision, stippling, and 3D works with applications were also created. Another peculiar and important category are the very large vessels, showing great technical skills in their elaboration. These have been found in association with burials, but most probably they were also used intensively in everyday life to store large quantities of liquids, seeds and roots. All pots and vessels are formed by hand (no use of potter's wheel) in a coiling technique. The clay is tempered with crushed quartz particles. The larger size vessels demonstrate the mastery and Excellency of the Dabajuro potters: it is difficult to fire such a large vessel in a simple oven: as soon as temperature differences develop within the oven, such



vessels will crack. The decorated pottery is thinner and of a very fine quality. Two main decoration techniques have been used, painted designs and applique modelling. The painted parts are mainly darker as compared to the lighter-background or color of the vessel. Colors as brown, reddish brown, red and black were used. The other decoration technique is modelling. Ranging from simple motifs as corrugated rims, extra applique rings around the rim of the vessel, also complicated ones such as interpreting stylized animal heads, like frogs, bats, birds, turtles etc. Human heads, anthropomorphic effigy, vessels and complete stylized animals were also produced. It is evident that pottery was very important for islands sedentary Amerindians of the Ceramic Period. It was not only used for different daily uses, as mentioned above, but

it also was used in burial practices, agro-religious as well as shamanic ceremonies. We conclude from this evidence that it had a very important place in the preparation of food and the ritual, symbolic, and religious life of the tribe. Designs that had inspired local artist as rock art and Dabajuro designs and folk stories. □

To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades.

Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.

Episode CV - 105

Savaneta, the first capital of Aruba

SAVANETA — Located on the southwestern coast of Aruba lies Savaneta. This old village was the island's first capital, and remained so until 1797, after which Oranjestad became the new capital of Aruba and remains so until this day. The oldest house in Aruba — a cas di torto, or mud hut, dating back some 150 years — is still standing in this historical town.

What to do in Savaneta

The rustic charisma and relaxed atmosphere of this community beckons islanders looking for a casual retreat from their busy lives, as well

as visitors looking for unfussy, authentic local charm. Relaxing days can be spent at Mangel Halto, a gem of a beach located just north of Savaneta, where a dense network of mangrove trees leads to an irresistibly inviting expanse of shallow, aquamarine water, made remarkably placid by the protective barrier reef further out.

Savaneta's proximity and easy access to the sea has made this area popular within the local fishing community. Visitors will enjoy mingling with islanders at Zeerovers, a fisherman's wharf-cum-roadhouse promising a heady mix of local



flavours. A counter near the entrance sells freshly caught fish to take away. Patrons can also have the fish prepared on the premises and then enjoy it on the waterside deck among the seasoned locals discussing the latest town news over a few ice-cold beers.

Savaneta in Aruba is home to the Roly Bislick Olympic Pool complex, the training grounds for Aruba's elite swimmers and synchronised swimmers and host to many international competitions. The Marine Barracks Savaneta is also based here, housing the Royal Netherlands Navy, the Netherlands Marine Corps, the Netherlands Coastguard and the Aruban Military.

Not only is Savaneta popular for its cultural richness, but it is also a very

tranquil place to stay. There are no big Savaneta resorts, but you will find a selection of small boutique Savaneta hotels, holiday rentals and bed and breakfast-style accommodations.

Savaneta restaurants are known for their extremely fresh seafood and varied cuisine with a Caribbean twist.

When you ask a local about their favourite things to do in Savaneta, the chances are that visiting Mangel Halto Beach is one of them. This beach is like no other on the island. It is a great snorkelling spot adorned with beautiful mangroves, but what attracts everyone to this Savaneta gem is the laid back atmosphere! □

Source: aruba.com

Watch 'Ask Pilar': our videos show you the other Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Aruba Today offers a series of videos 'Ask Pilar' on their Facebook page Aruba Today and on the website www.arubatoday.com. Since the start, October 2019, more than 20 videos have been created. Let us introduce to you this project and present the people behind it.

Why a video? Besides offering our free daily newspaper, posts on Facebook and Instagram and our website content, we started evaluating the plans for short video's about a year ago. The concept was created by Editor-in-Chief Linda Reijnders to add variety to the product Aruba Today. "There is more to this island than palm trees and beaches and in our videos we wish to inform and educate the visitor by showing local places and characters of any kind. We are all new to this, the goal is not to deliver a technical perfect



result, more to motivate our visitors with the places we visit as well as transmitting the good energy coming from it." As the title of the video 'Ask Pilar' already shows, the viewer has the opportunity to actually ask about the topics shown, or even suggest a location for a video. Just ask our host Pilar on Facebook and we will let you know.

The team

Pilar Flores, 35- years- old, is the jolly host of 'Ask Pilar'. She loves doing the videos because she gets to know many interesting places and meet a lot of nice people. "I hope with it that people will get to know and love Aruba the way us locals do."

The one capturing the images with his camera and

editing them is our videographer Juan Luis Pinto Sotter, Marketing Major at the University of Aruba. "I chose marketing because I wanted a career that kept me physically and mentally active. As a marketer there is a lot of moving around, I can't begin to imagine what the real world will be like."

Video Director of 'Ask Pi-

lar' is Editor-in-Chief Linda Reijnders, working in this current position since July 2017. "I love working in the media, I love to write, create, connect, inform and educate. Working with young, talented and motivated people like Juan Luis and Pilar is a blessing to me. We really enjoy making these Aruba Peeks and we surely hope that rubs off on the viewer."

Corona Street Talk

During the pandemic a new series of videos was launched, dedicated to the COVID-19 crisis where we show people in their daily life during the corona time. Take a look on the website and social media for this new series called Corona Street Talk.

Check us out on Facebook Aruba Today or the website www.arubatoday.com and do not forget to like and share! Thank you for your support! □

Oprah and CNN: AT&T is merging media business with Discovery

By DAVID BAUDER and MAE ANDERSON

Associated Press Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — The merger of Discovery and AT&T's WarnerMedia operations, marrying the likes of HBO and CNN with HGTV and Oprah Winfrey, is another illustration of the head-spinning speed in which streaming has transformed the media world. The companies are essentially placing a \$43 billion bet that they'll still be in the mix when consumers decide how to spend their monthly entertainment budgets.

The agreement was announced Monday after AT&T CEO John Stankey and his Discovery counterpart, David Zaslav, worked out the details in Zaslav's Manhattan brownstone over the past two months. "I think, together, the combination makes us the best media company in the world," said Zaslav, who will run the new company if approvals are granted, probably sometime next year.

The deal also represents a strategic retreat for AT&T. The hope for the newly



In this Oct. 21, 2014 file photo, people pass an AT&T store in New York's Times Square.

Associated Press

merged company is that, with a wider array of material than either can offer on its own, it can join Netflix, Amazon and Disney in the widely acknowledged top tier of streamers.

Analysts say it also makes it imperative that services below that tier — think Paramount+ or Peacock — find some way to ramp up or risk being left behind.

WarnerMedia and Discovery both launched their own streaming services,

HBO Max and Discovery+, within the past two years. It's still not clear whether the merger will result in a single streaming service or several bundled together, but it will have a vast array of content to offer: scripted and reality TV, movies, sports including the NBA and NCAA men's basketball tournament, and news with CNN. With consumers figuring out which streaming services they use regularly

and which they can give up, that depth means a better chance they will use this new one regularly, said Raj Venkatesan, professor of business administration at the University of Virginia. The average U.S. household spends \$40 a month on streaming services.

"It either has something for everyone in the family, or is so diverse that it is hard to explain," said Jim Nail, an analyst for Forrester Research.

HBO Max and HBO have a combined global subscriber base of about 63.9 million, and Discovery+ has about 15 million subscribers. That compares with Netflix, which has more than 200 million subscribers worldwide, and Disney+, which counts over 100 million.

In a call with investors, Zaslav said he believes that the standalone company could garner "200, 300, 400 million" subscribers at some point in the future, but there were no details regarding a timeline.

The deal is a stark reminder of how much the entertainment world has changed, said Tim Hanlon, CEO of the media consultants Vertere Group.

"I think most consumers now look at live television as being something of an anachronism," he said.

While it increases the pressure on smaller streaming services like Peacock or Paramount+ to find partners, those two are affiliated with the NBC and CBS television networks — so doing so would require a rethinking of the broadcast industry regulatory process, Hanlon said. □

EU, U.S. agree to temporarily suspend tariffs in steel dispute

By RAF CASERT
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union and the United States on Monday decided to temporarily suspend measures at the heart of a steel tariff dispute that is seen as one of the major trade issues dividing the two sides.

With the decision, "we are walking the talk in our efforts to reboot the trans-Atlantic relationship," EU trade chief Valdis Dombrovskis said. It will affect anything from steel production to Kentucky bourbon sales.

On top of suspending the measures, both sides also said they are committed to talks "to address global steel and aluminum excess capacity."

"We are creating the space to resolve these is-

sues before the end of the year," Dombrovskis said. It was the second palpable step to get back to better trade relations under President Joe Biden after both sides in March decided on a four-month suspension of tariffs used in the longstanding Airbus-Boeing dispute.

"As early as December 2020, the EU reached out to the Biden administration with a plan for a renewed EU-U.S. agenda, and we are pleased to see this approach bearing fruit," Dombrovskis said.

The decision comes in time for the visit of Biden to EU headquarters in mid-June to discuss a new relationship after the bloc's difficult relationship with his predecessor, Donald Trump.

The issue goes back to the 2018 tariffs that Trump

slapped on EU steel and aluminum, which enraged European and other allies by calling their metals a threat to U.S. national security. The Article 232 proceeding both hurts European producers and has raised the cost of steel for American companies.

"The EU is not a national security threat to the U.S. But the distortions created by global excess capacity — driven largely by third parties — pose a serious threat to the market-oriented EU and U.S.," Dombrovskis said.

Together, the EU and U.S. would be better positioned to deal with major steel producer China, which is seen as partly responsible for the glut. When Trump imposed the tariffs, Europe retaliated by raising tariffs on U.S.-



In this April 27, 2018 photo a worker controls iron at the Thyssenkrupp steel factory in Duisburg, Germany.

Associated Press

made motorcycles, bourbon, peanut butter and jeans, among other items. The U.S. spirits industry was one of the first to react.

"This news couldn't come soon enough. Distillers across the United States are breathing a huge sigh of relief after bracing for

a 50% tariff on American whiskeys in just a matter of days," said Chris Swonger, president of the Distilled Spirits Council. He said any extension "would have forced many craft distillers out of the EU market," one of the most lucrative markets in the world. □

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 42 Oozes

1 Buccaneers' city 43 Critic, at times

6 Mamas' mates

11 "The Tempest" sprite

12 Revere

13 Match site

15 Stop

16 "The Simpsons" bartender

17 Sewer rodent

18 Writer Chandler

20 Low digit

21 Major lang.

22 Olympics sled

23 Swell

26 Carries

27 "Exodus" author

28 Cal. column

29 1949 film noir classic

30 Nap

34 Bed-and-breakfast

35 Dawn goddess

36 Kilmer of "The Doors"

37 Game site

40 Tire feature

41 Singer Lennox



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONG FELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-18

CRYPTOQUOTE

VAZHAQT TWL NWL ESCSQ ZWL
YS IATEHECS AQ USPWHFCS.
TAGSHEGST HNS SLST NWCS PH.
WUV TAGSHEGST HNS UATS.

— WUAULGAMT

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: SOMEBODY ONCE SAID WE NEVER KNOW WHAT IS ENOUGH UNTIL WE KNOW WHAT'S MORE THAN ENOUGH! — BILLIE HOLIDAY

Insider Q&A: Sophie Zhang, Facebook whistleblower



This photo provided by Lisa Danz shows Sophie Zhang. Zhang worked as a low-level Facebook data scientist nearly three years before she was fired in the fall of 2020.

Associated Press

By BARBARA ORTUTAY

Sophie Zhang worked as a Facebook data scientist for nearly three years before she was fired in the fall of 2020. On her final day, she posted a 7,800-word memo to the company's internal forum — such farewell notes, if not the length, are a common practice for departing employees. In the memo, first published by Buzzfeed, she outlined evidence that governments in countries like Azerbaijan and Honduras were using fake accounts to influence the public. Elsewhere, such as India and Ecuador, Zhang found coordinated activity intended to manipulate public opinion, although it wasn't clear who was behind it. Facebook, she said, didn't take her findings seriously.

Zhang's experience led her to a stark conclusion: "I have blood on my hands." Facebook has not disputed the facts of Zhang's story but has sought to diminish the importance of her findings.

"We fundamentally disagree with Ms. Zhang's characterization of our priorities and efforts to root out abuse on our platform," Facebook said in a statement. "As part of our crackdown against this kind of abuse, we have specialized teams focused on this work and have already taken down more than 150 networks of coordinated inauthentic behavior. Around half of them were domestic networks that operated in Latin America,

the Middle East, North Africa, and in the Asia Pacific region."

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

QUESTION: Why were you fired from Facebook?

ANSWER: I've made the news for much of the work I have done protecting elections. This might sound very important to the average person, but at Facebook I was a very low-level employee. In addition, this work was not my official job. I was conducting it entirely in my spare time, with the knowledge and acquiescence of leadership, of course. At first, the company was supportive of this. But gradually they lost patience with me. I was underperforming.

Q: In your memo, you wrote that you have blood on your hands. Why did you say that?

A: Whether something was acted on was, as far as I could tell, entirely a function of how much I yelled, how much I made noise.

I know that many of the decisions they have made have had impact in the countries that they worked on. The U.S. is still deeply affected by what happened in 2016 with Russian manipulation on Facebook. For many countries like Honduras or Azerbaijan, this is their own Russia. But it's done not by a foreign power, but by their own government — and without even bothering to hide.

I tried my best to make decisions based on the information I had at the time.

But of course I am just one person. Sometimes I waited on something longer than I should have. At this level of responsibility, your best is often not enough.

Q: How did you get into the work you did?

A: When I joined the company I was, like many people, deeply affected by Russia 2016. And I decided to start looking for overlap between inauthentic activity and political targets. And I started finding many results in many places, particularly what we call the global South, in Honduras, Brazil, India.

Honduras got my attention because it had a very large amount (of inauthentic behavior) compared to the others. This was very unsophisticated activity we are talking about. Literal bots. And then I realized that this was essentially a troll farm being run quite openly by an employee of the president of Honduras. And that seemed extraordinarily awful.

Q: Then what did you do?
I talked about it internally. Essentially everyone agreed that it was bad. No one wants to be defending this sort of activity, but people couldn't agree on whose job it was to deal with it.

I was trying desperately to find anyone who cared. I talked with my manager and their manager. I talked to the threat intelligence team. I talked with many integrity teams. It took almost a year for anything to happen.

Q: You've said there is a priority list of countries. What happens to countries that aren't on that list?

A: It's not a hard and fast rule. Facebook does takedowns in small countries, too. But most of these takedowns are reactive, by which I mean they come from outside groups — tips from opposition groups, tips from NGOs, reporter investigations, reports from the CIA, etc. What happened in this case was that no one outside the company was complaining. □

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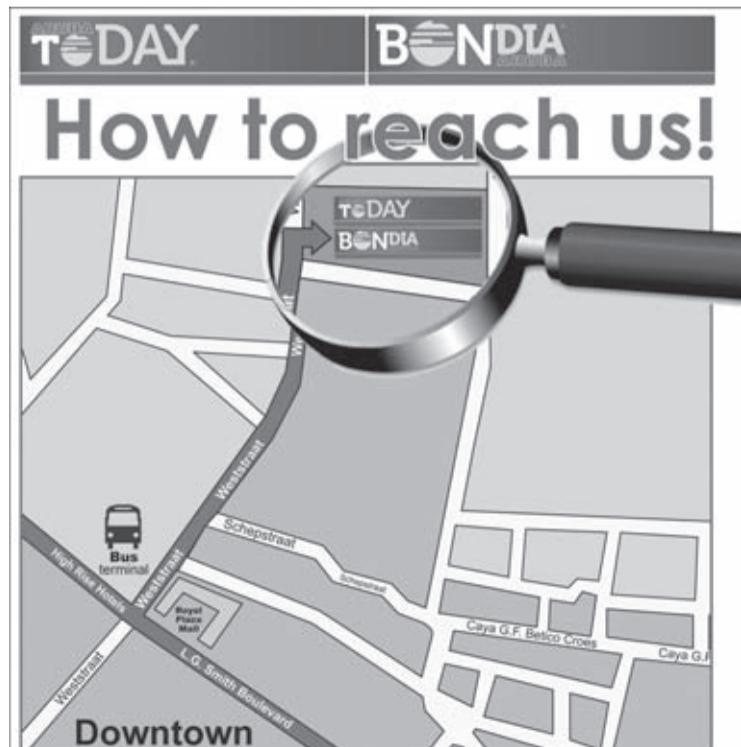
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CDC director says mask turnaround based solely on science

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI
The head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Sunday defended the decision to ease mask-wearing guidance for fully vaccinated people, stressing that increasing political pressure had nothing to do with the abrupt shift in guidelines. "I'm delivering the science as the science is delivered to the medical journals. And it evolved," CDC Di-

rector Rochelle Walensky said on FOX News Sunday. "I deliver it as soon as I can when we have that information available." Under the new guidelines released last week, fully vaccinated people — those who are two weeks past their final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine — can quit wearing masks outdoors in crowds and in most indoor settings and give up social distancing. □

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Review: 'Woman in the Window' is, alas, a muddled mess

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

The girl isn't gone. There's one on the train, and there's another in the window.

"Woman in the Window," based on A.J. Finn's 2018 best-seller, is the latest adaptation in a run on female-led thrillers that have gone from page to screen with their intriguingly vague titles intact. Gillian Flynn's "Gone Girl" kicked off a mini-craze that, in movie form at least, began promisingly. David Fincher's adaptation — an engrossingly dark inquiry into marriage — is still the best of the bunch. But that's not saying much considering the knockoffs that have followed.

Just as in Tate Taylor's adaptation of "The Girl on the Train," Joe Wright's "Woman in the Window" is a seemingly made-for-the-movies tale that falls oddly limp in the transfer. These are all books that trade heavily on cinematic tropes and traditions, and none more so than the novel by Finn (real name Dan Mallory). The book's blend of voyeurism and psychodrama scream movies. It's baked right into



This image released by Netflix shows Amy Adams in a scene from "The Woman in the Window."
Associated Press

both the book and film, with allusions here to Hitchcock, the Humphrey Bogart thriller "Dark Passage" and the very, very great '40s noir "Laura."

That's probably what attracted so much talent to "Woman in the Window," which debuts Friday on Netflix. It stars Amy Adams,

Julianne Moore, Gary Oldman, Brian Tyree Henry and even finds room for Anthony Mackie in a part mostly heard over the phone. The script is by the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and actor Tracy Letts. The film is produced by Scott Rudin (his first released since renewed allegations of bul-

lying and abusive behavior forced him to step back from moviemaking). All the ingredients are there. And yet "Woman in the Window," which had a labored path to release, comes off as a pastiche of better films, with all the requisite shadows but none of the substance.

Adam plays Anna Fox, an agoraphobic child psychologist who, after a tragedy, is too frightened to leave her Harlem brownstone, which she keeps darkened, without the lights on. Just right there is a hint of the problems in "Woman in the Window." The melodrama has been turned up to the max. In just one little character description you get psychology, kids, trauma, grief and gentrification. Anna is heavily medicated, including some large glasses of red wine.

As a narrator, she's so abundantly unreliable that it makes the movie's coming twists all the more foreseeable. (I say this as someone who normally sees nothing coming.) Wright sticks closely to her perspective. The movie barely sets foot outside Anna's home, a 19th century townhouse with a circular staircase and, naturally, a skylight. Our experience of every encounter is, like Anna's paranoia, extremely heightened. No

one just talks in "Woman in the Window." Every conversation of Anna's is full of probing and prying, veiled threats and landmines. The only exception is Henry's sensitive, melancholic police detective, a grounding force in a movie choking on its own atmosphere.

But by hewing close to Anna's own intense unease, "Woman in the Window" attempts something like the recent Oscar-winning "The Father," which adapted its protagonist's dementia. This is the kind of stuff that Brian De Palma would eat for breakfast. He, surely, would find more disturbing and lurid avenues to explore here.

People just keep walking into Anna's home, including her basement tenant, an aspiring musician played by Wyatt Russell. She has a few bizarre meetings with members of a newly moved in family across the street (Oldman, Moore and Fred Hechinger, who plays the 15-year-old son Ethan). Picking up some very heavy cues, Anna begins to fear for the boy and spies across the street. One night, she's looking through a telephoto lens when she sees a woman thrown against the wall and stabbed in the belly. When police respond to Anna, she's told no one is missing. She's introduced by the woman she met, Jane Russell — only now it's a different Jane, played by Jennifer Jason Leigh.

With a churning score and a few flashy camera tricks, Wright lays it on thick. But the pacing and rhythm — perhaps the result of a lengthy post-production period of reshoots and re-cuts — feel wrong from the first minutes. It's a shame. Adult thrillers with stars and some scale are a rare breed. But the movie, straining for high brow when it should have just gone full trash, is a muddle from start to finish. After a year of quarantine and lockdown, it's all the more tempting — given the messy results — to listen to an early question posed by Anna: "Why not make today the day you go outside?" □

Andrea Meza of Mexico crowned 69th Miss Universe



This image released by Miss Universe Organization shows Miss Universe Mexico 2020 Andrea Meza who was crowned Miss Universe at the 69th Miss Universe Competition at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood, Fla. on Sunday, May 16, 2021.

Associated Press

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (AP) —

Andrea Meza of Mexico has been crowned Miss Universe.

Meza, who has a software engineering degree, beat out Miss Brazil at the end of the night, screaming Sunday when the announcer shouted "Viva Mexico!"

Previous winner Zozibini Tunzi fit the crown on Meza's head and waited to make sure it would stay in place as Meza beamed and took her first walk to the front of the stage. Tunzi, a public relations professional who became the first Black woman from South Africa to win the contest, had held the title since December 2019. Last year's ceremony was canceled due to the pandemic.

The pageant was hosted by "Access Hollywood's" Mario Lopez and actor and model Olivia Culpo, the 2012 Miss Universe. It was broadcast live from the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Hollywood in Hollywood, Florida.

Ahead of the pageant, Paula M. Shugart, president of the Miss Universe Organization, stated that they had spent months planning a safe competition that followed similar guidelines as last November's 2020 Miss USA competition held in Memphis. The Miss Universe competition airs in more than 160 territories and countries across the globe including in the U.S. on the FYI channel and on Telemundo. □

LeBron vs. Steph: A play-in game will be a superstar tussle

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP Basketball Writer

LeBron vs. Steph.

Oh, what a way to get into NBA playoff mode.

The matchups for the NBA's new play-in tournament are set. It starts Tuesday night with the Eastern Conference: No. 10 Charlotte at No. 9 Indiana, and No. 8 Washington at No. 7 Boston. And things shift to the Western Conference on Wednesday night: No. 10 San Antonio at No. 9 Memphis, and No. 8 Golden State at the seventh-seeded Los Angeles Lakers.

LeBron James and Stephen Curry have squared off four times for championships, back in the days of those Warriors-Cleveland matchups in the NBA Finals being annual events. They'll square off Wednesday for a slightly different prize — the No. 7 seed in the West playoffs, but it'll still be a game loaded with hype and intrigue.

"It'll be a different scenario, but another chapter in it," said Curry, the NBA's scoring champion this season for the second time in his career. "At the end of the day, you expect greatness. That's the part I've enjoyed so much about playing in the finals against him ... those games that matter, it just brings out another level of intensity and excitement and a sense of urgency about it, because you know how good you have to play to win games like that."

The Lakers are still the second choice to win the NBA title, according to FanDuel, behind only Brooklyn. And they're the favorites to win the West. Problem is, technically, they're not in the playoffs yet — and need a win in the play-in round, Wednesday or Friday if necessary, just to get back to the postseason and have a chance to defend their championship.

James said he considers Curry the MVP of the NBA this season. He's eager to cross paths in a big-time moment with Curry and the Warriors once again, and said he'll take a play-off-game approach to the



Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (30), left, reacts after shooting a 3-point basket against the Memphis Grizzlies during the second half of an NBA basketball game in San Francisco, Sunday, May 16, 2021; and Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23), right, celebrates after scoring against the New Orleans Pelicans in the third quarter of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans, Sunday, May 16, 2021.

Associated Press

play-in.

"They've got championship DNA as well," James said. "They've been there. They know what it takes and what it feels like to be in pressure games."

Confidence, among the Lakers, does not appear to be in short supply. They've been banged up all season, were with James and Anthony Davis for long stretches, and might have gotten another scare when James appeared to tweak his problematic right ankle in the latter stages of Sunday's finale in New Orleans. James said afterward that he'll be fine, ready for what comes next. He made headlines a couple weeks ago when he said the person responsible for coming up with the idea of the play-in tournament at the NBA should be fired. If the Lakers don't win one of their next two games and wind up missing the playoffs, his opinion of the tourney will figure to get worse.

"We're getting healthy at the right time," Lakers veteran Jared Dudley said. "And nobody wants to see a healthy Lakers team." Under the old system, the Lakers, Warriors, Celtics and Wizards would be in the playoffs. The Grizzlies, Spurs,

Pacers and Hornets would be out.

Getting to the No. 8 spot for the play-in round in the East is a massive comeback for the Wizards, who started the season 0-5 and 3-12, were shut down for two weeks in January for coronavirus-related issues, had to play 38 games in the season's final 67 days to make up for lost time and were 17-32 early last month. They're 17-6 since. The play-in was their path to saving the season.

"I'm with the King, man. Why do they have this play-in thing? Whoever did that, they need to be fired," Washington coach Scott Brooks said, tongue firmly in cheek behind his mask. "No, I'm kidding. I love this. It created so much excitement the last two weeks,

and as we all know anytime you can create excitement and meaningful games in the last 10 games of the season it's great for everyone involved."

The 7-8 game winners in each conference go to the playoffs as No. 7 seeds; the West winner will play Phoenix in the first round, the East winner draws a matchup with Brooklyn. The 7-8 game loser will play host to the 9 vs. 10 winner in each conference; whomever prevails there will be the No. 8 seed and meet either Utah — the NBA's overall No. 1 seed — out West or Philadelphia in the East. But before the playoffs officially begin this weekend, LeBron vs. Steph, a pair of guys who just happened to both be born in Akron, Ohio, looms.

"You're talking about two of the greatest players of all time," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "Both guys are still playing at such an elite level. And of course, four meetings in the finals is going to create a rivalry. But there's obviously tremendous mutual respect between the two of them." The other matchups are set: No. 3 Milwaukee faces No. 6 Miami and No. 4 New York plays No. 5 Atlanta in the East quarterfinals, while No. 3 Denver meets No. 6 Portland and the fourth-seeded Los Angeles Clippers drew No. 5 Dallas in the West quarterfinals. Denver lost to Portland on Sunday, a result that kept the Blazers from the play-in — and kept the Nuggets from seeing the Lakers in Round 1.

"Good strategy," Dudley said.

Boston and the Lakers have the inside track to postseason spots. As the highest-seeded teams in the play-in, they will get two chances if necessary, both at home, to win just one game and make the playoffs.

"You win, you're in. You lose, you're not," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said. "I think that that's something that will add a great deal of intrigue to fans and people are going to be excited about it. But you've got to be appropriately prepared, again, to play a fast game with a clear mind."

The game to decide No. 8 in the East is Thursday, and the one that'll decide No. 8 in the West is Friday. The playoffs start Saturday.

"We're excited that we have the opportunity to keep playing," Kerr said. □





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Yes: Marv Albert, NBA's 'soundtrack,' retiring before Finals

By BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer

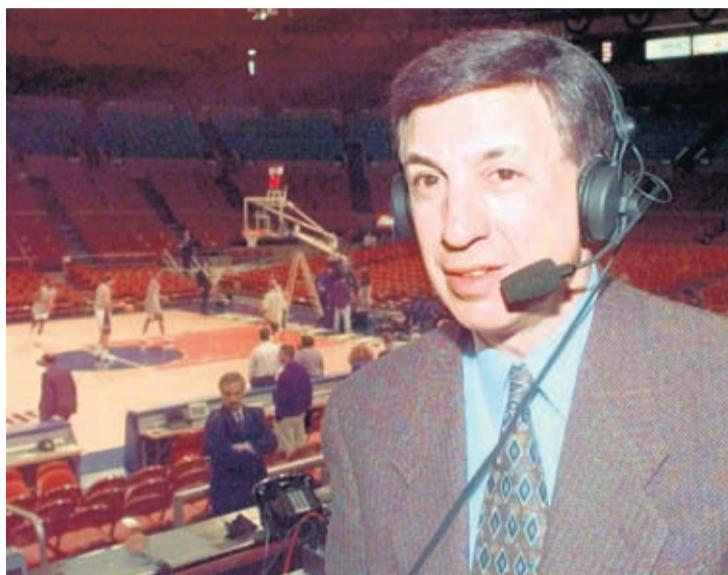
NEW YORK (AP) — From Michael Jordan soaring through the air to Willis Reed simply walking onto the court, Marv Albert supplied the sound that went with the sights.

Albert has called numerous sports during a Hall of Fame career that spans nearly 60 years, though he is mostly linked to basketball.

"There is no voice more closely associated with NBA basketball than Marv Albert's," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said in a statement released Monday by Turner Sports.

Albert plans to retire after calling the NBA's Eastern Conference finals, ending a career that began on the radio in 1963.

Albert will call the series for TNT. He has been with Turner for 22 years, 19 as an NBA play-by-play announcer.



Marv Albert poses at Madison Square Garden in New York, in this Sunday, Feb. 7, 1999, file photo, where he broadcast the Knicks season home opener against the Miami Heat for WFAN radio.

Associated Press

"My 55 years of broadcasting the NBA has just flown by and I've been fortunate to work with so many wonderful and talented people," Albert said. "Now, I'll have the opportunity to

hone my gardening skills and work on my ballroom dancing."

Albert, known for his signature "Yes!" call, turns 80 next month. He has covered everything from football and

boxing to hockey, baseball and tennis.

But his voice is known to most through basketball, having called 13 NBA Finals and 25 All-Star Games for NBC and Turner, along with the Dream Team's romp to the gold medal in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

Silver said his earliest memories of basketball were listening to Albert call Knicks games. Many fans who came to the game during Jordan's run to six championships in the 1990s heard the same voice first.

"From his remarkable run as play-by-play announcer for the Knicks to his prominent national roles calling our marquee games on NBC and Turner Sports, Marv has been the soundtrack for basketball fans for nearly 60 years," Silver said.

Albert became the voice of the New York Rangers in 1965 and the Knicks two

years later. He was on the radio call in 1970 when the Knicks won their first championship, a memorable moment in NBA history after an injured Reed emerged from the locker room moments before Game 7 against the Los Angeles Lakers at Madison Square Garden.

"And here comes Willis, and the crowd is going wild!" Albert said.

He began doing Knicks games on TV for MSG Network in 1986 until he and the organization parted in 2004 over disagreements with his salary and style.

Albert was also fired by NBC in 1997 after pleading guilty to assault in a lurid sex case, when a longtime lover accused him of biting her on the back more than a dozen times and forcing her to perform oral sex.

Albert also called eight Super Bowls and eight Stanley Cup Finals. □

Sagan wins 10th stage of Giro; Bernal loses a second of lead

FOLIGNO, Italy (AP) — Peter Sagan won the 10th stage of the Giro d'Italia in a sprint Monday, while Egan Bernal had one second shaved off his overall lead. Remco Evenepoel earned one second more than Bernal in an intermediate sprint and is now 14 seconds behind the Ineos Grenadiers rider.

Sagan surged ahead of Fernando Gaviria in sight of the finish line after the undulating 139-kilometer (86-

mile) route from L'Aquila to Foligno.

Gaviria crossed second and Davide Cimolai was third, all with the same time of 3 hours, 10 minutes. It was the 18th stage win for Sagan at Grand Tours -- 12 at the Tour de France, four at the Spanish Vuelta and two at the Giro.

Tuesday is the race's first rest day.

The Giro finishes on May 30 in Milan with an individual time trial. □

Serena Williams posts 1st victory in more than 3 months



Serena Williams of the United States returns the ball to Italy's Lisa Pigato during their match at the Emilia Romagna Open tennis tournament, in Parma, Italy, Monday, May 17, 2021.

Associated Press

PARMA, Italy (AP) — Serena Williams earned her first victory in more than

three months by beating 17-year-old qualifier Lisa Pigato 6-3, 6-2 Monday in

the first round of the Emilia-Romagna Open.

Williams, who accepted a wild-card invitation for the Parma tournament after losing her opening match at the Italian Open last week, dominated after dropping her serve in the opening game.

"I'm just starting to feel more comfortable. I've always felt super comfortable on the clay and this year has been a little more difficult than normal," said Williams, who served six aces. "I think it was because of the long hiatus I've had (from) the clay."

Williams hadn't won since beating Simona Halep in the Australian Open quarterfinals in February. □